

Tear The Continents

Purpose: In order to gain a better understanding of Earth's continents, students will tear paper into representative continent shapes and configure them with world oceans through relative location, direction, and latitude and longitude starting points.

Grade Level: K-3

National Geography Standards:

Indiana Social Studies Standards:

K.3.1; K.3.2; 1.3.1; 1.3.2; 2.3.1; 3.3.2

Materials Needed:

Blue and brown butcher paper or construction paper

Blank white paper

Atlases

String/yarn

Black markers

Tape

Bulletin board or wall space similar in size

Objectives: The students will...

1. recognize the shape of the continents,
2. recognize the location of the continents with respect to each other and the Prime Meridian and the Equator, and
3. identify the continents and major world oceans by name.

Background: Students should understand the differences between globes and maps.

Procedures:

1. Review the differences between globes and maps, and discuss how land and water is usually represented (colors) on both representations of the earth's surface.
2. Divide the students into groups of 3 or 4 and give each group an atlas, brown paper and blue paper. (Adaptation for special needs: give each group a blackline copy of each continent, specifically showing the outline they are to copy when they tear the brown paper.)
3. Instruct students to refer to their atlas and "tear" the shapes of each continent from the brown paper. Have them concentrate on the shape, regardless of the size they make the continents. It is important they focus on shape first. If needed, you may want to list each of the continents they are to "tear" a shape for on the board and instruct them as to which page they would find an appropriate map on. Be sure to avoid maps that are not conformal (distorts the shape of the continents).
4. Once the group has each continent torn from the brown paper, ask them to arrange them on the blue piece of paper and draw a directional arrow somewhere on the edge of the blue paper. Remind them that north is usually at the top of a map and south at the bottom.

For more advanced students:

5. Require the students to keep continent sizes as accurate as possible with respect to each other.

6. Give each group a black marker and a white sheet of paper. They are to list each major Ocean on the white paper with the black marker given and simply tear around each to use as labels around their continents.
7. Once the students have their continents and ocean labels torn out, they are to place them on the blue piece of paper. (Do not have them use tape until after the next step.)
8. Now give each group some yarn or string. Instruct them to use the string to label the starting point for both latitude and longitude (Equator and Prime Meridian). They may need to move the continents around a little.
9. Lastly, have each group use their black marker to add a star to indicate their position on the globe.

Evaluation:

- Teacher observation of student participation
- Map created with required components
- Map quiz using either a blank world map or general outlines of the continents requiring students to label each continent (and oceans if more advanced).
- Worksheet requiring students to use their maps to answer questions like:
 - Which continents have the Equator/Prime Meridian running through them?
 - What continent lies directly south of Europe?
 - If you were flying directly east from Asia, what continent would you reach first?

Related Websites:

Extensions:

This exercise can be done as a class as well and created on a larger scale on a bulletin board. Additional lines of latitude and longitude can be added (ie-tropics, home coordinates or lines). Hemisphere labels can also be added.